

Richard

Strawss

CONDUCTS

Gluck

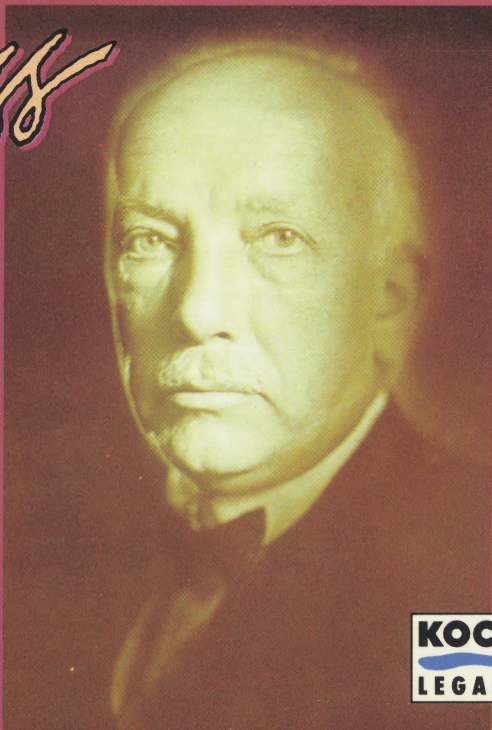
Mozart

Weber

Wagner

Cornelius

BERLIN
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA
BERLIN STATE
STATE OPERA
ORCHESTRA



KOCH

LEGACY

3-7119-2 H1

RICHARD STRAUSS Conducts
The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
The Berlin State Opera Orchestra**CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK**

arr: Richard Wagner

[1] **Overture to Iphigenie in Aulis** 9:27

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART[2] **Overture to The Magic Flute, K. 620** 5:46**Symphony No. 40 in g, K. 550 (21:48)**[3] **Allegro molto** 5:32[4] **Andante** 7:25[5] **Minuetto** 3:43[6] **Allegro assai** 4:50

The Berlin State Opera Orchestra

CARL MARIA VON WEBER[7] **Overture to Euryanthe** 7:32**PETER CORNELIUS**

(edited by Franz Liszt)

[8] **Overtune to The Barber of Bagdad** 7:13**RICHARD WAGNER**[9] **Overture to Der Fliegende Holländer** 9:26[10] **Prelude to Act I of Tristan und Isolde** 8:58

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

Total Time 70:45

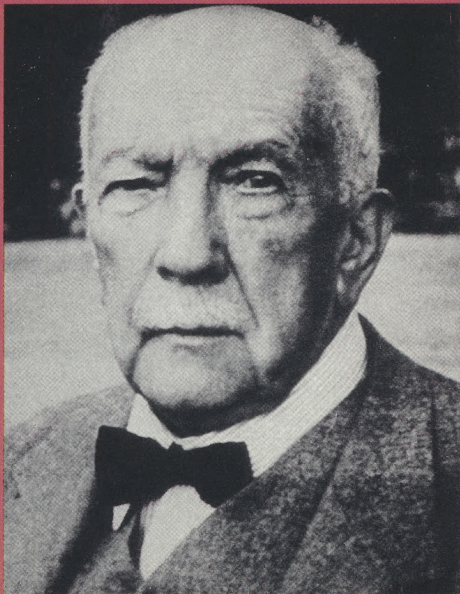
RECORDED IN 1928

Disc-to-tape transfers: H. Ward Marston

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RICHARD STRAUSS: MEMENTOS

Perhaps, as he entered his sixty-fifth year, Richard Strauss paused for reflection. Or he may have decided, as he enjoyed semi-retirement made interesting by preparations for *Die ägyptische Helena* (première under Fritz Busch in Dresden on June 5; Strauss conducted the first Vienna performance on his birthday, June 11), that it was proper time to leave a few souvenirs of a life as devoted to promoting the glories of his musical heritage as to his own contributions to it. Whatever the reason, the majority of his recording activity for 1928 would complete what had begun two years earlier, documentation of his work with other composers. What Strauss selected would prove to be music that had a special meaning for him, often with echoes from the early days of his long career.

Strauss once said that there were two types of conductors—symphonic and operatic. He had no doubt as to which he was. In 1922, midway through what proved to be his last formal position, the famous musician set down *Ten Golden Rules for the Album of a young Conductor*. These—some say cynically—offered advice clearly directed to “the many concert-hall conductors who have unfortunately taken to conducting opera,” such maxims as “Never look encouragingly at the brass, except with a short glance to give an important cue” and “if you

hear them they are too strong.” The son of a distinguished horn player, whose own music depended heavily on brass, told aspiring maestros “if you think the brass is not blowing hard enough, tone it down another shade or two.” Yet the logic becomes clear when we read the Rule which says “Always accompany a singer in such a way that he can sing without effort.” Only a man of the theatre would subordinate personal aggrandizement to the more pressing needs of the total production.

It could be said that Richard Strauss lived opera from his very early days, in that his father Franz Strauss, principal horn of the Munich Court Opera, would have studied his parts at home in preparation for rehearsals. The future composer of *Der Rosenkavalier* saw his first complete operas, *Der Freischütz* and *Die Zauberflöte* in 1870, at age six. That same year he began his life-long association with music for voice with a little Christmas tune, the first of a substantial number of songs which he would write by age eighteen. His musical education was unusual, in that it was received from working professionals in Munich, and must have included many visits to rehearsals at the Court Opera. (Sixty years later he would write his bittersweet *Metamorphosen*, as homage to those precious memories lost when the opera house was destroyed during aerial bombardment.)

The professional career of Richard Strauss began almost precipitously, when he was selected as conducting assistant to Hans von

Bülow at the Meiningen Court Orchestra. Seven months later, at age twenty-two, he obtained appointment as third conductor of the Munich Court Opera, where his first important success was Cornelius’ *Barbier von Bagdad*. Munich was one of the more important opera cities of Europe, but opportunities for advancement were limited, causing Strauss to look to Weimar. Although the Weimar Opera was only in the third rank of the German opera hierarchy (and Strauss eventually became disenchanted with its limited facilities) the years he spent there (1889-1894) were critical to his artistic development. As first conductor, he was responsible only to the director, and learned quickly what choices had to be made to ensure a quality production. Operas he first conducted at Weimar were to become “old friends”: *Die Zauberflöte*, *Die fliegende Holländer* and, especially, *Tristan und Isolde*. His father had been fiercely conservative, and forbidden the music of Wagner in the Strauss household. At age seventeen Richard had secretly procured a piano score of this opera, and become an instant convert to Wagner’s ideas—more so after he heard an actual performance while on a visit to Bologna in 1888. He heard *Tristan* at Bayreuth just before taking on his first Munich appointment, and if any one work can be said to run through his life it is this. While at Weimar Strauss contracted near-fatal pneumonia, and during convalescence he wrote a friend, “Dying may not be so bad, but I should first like to conduct *Tristan*”. His wish was granted the next season, as he spent

Christmas as Bayreuth, where Cosima Wagner allowed him the rare privilege of examining the composer’s score and notes, then presented his first *Tristan* at Weimar on January 17, 1892. This necessarily chamber-music (reduced orchestration) version had Cosima’s approval and included his future wife, Pauline de Ahna, as Isolde. (Pauline also appeared as Pamina and Freihild, heroine of *Guntram*, Strauss’ first, failed attempt at an opera.)

Strauss returned to Munich as second conductor in 1894, on the promise that he would succeed Hermann Levi when the latter retired. Typically, he began his tenure with a cycle of Mozart operas and *Tristan und Isolde* (full orchestration). Levi retired in 1896, by which time Richard Strauss had become a man with a double career: duties in Munich had to compete with frequent requests to guest-conduct (including tours of Switzerland, Hungary, Russia and England) due to his growing fame as the composer of *Aus Italien* (1887), *Don Juan* (1889), *Tod und Verklärung* (1890), *Till Eulenspiegel* (1895) and *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1896). But a place greater than Munich now beckoned—Berlin.

In 1898 Strauss was offered, and accepted, the post of First *Kapellmeister* of the Royal Prussian Court. The Berlin Royal Opera was the most influential musical organization of its day, and although it might seem that his fame as a composer would have played its part in his selection (undoubtedly it did), his reputation as a

conductor brought him—at only the age of thirty-four—to the most important post a German opera conductor could have. Again, he chose *Tristan* with which to make his debut on November 5, 1898. He would remain in Berlin for twenty years.

Those familiar with only his compositions know these Berlin years as those in which he wrote *Salome* (1905), *Elektra* (1909), his masterwork, *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912/1916) and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919). Yet all the first performances dated above were given elsewhere, and at the Royal Opera these new works were merely a part of the larger business, that of presenting the full range of opera to Berlin. This pattern continued in 1919, when he left the city of his birth to join the staff of the Vienna State Opera, as co-director with Franz Schalk. In Vienna, his first year included restudied performances of *Fidelio*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Zauberflöte*. After 1924 he retired from day-to-day life in opera, devoting more time to composition, and to conducting what and when he chose.

Recordings occupied only a small part of his well-organized life, and in a few of them, all of his own music, he sounds bored—perhaps understandable considering how often he had been asked to direct a handful of early compositions in the twenty-five years elapsed since most of them were written. Other recordings are first-rate, in the non-nonsense way he preferred all music to be given. There are no examples of his

work in opera *per se*, although a few claimed radio transcriptions (very difficult to authenticate) do exist. Thus the commercial recordings of opera overtures which occupy this disc, all recorded in 1928, will have to serve as a small reminder of an immensely greater whole.

Mozart occupied as special a place in Strauss' life as did Wagner's great opera. From his earliest days he revered this composer, and when his wife was dangerously ill, he gained strength from hearing Mozart's music. In his final retirement he took solace in study of the Quartets. The Mozart *Symphony No. 40* had been in his repertoire since his earliest days, and was to be the only work not of his own composition that he rerecorded. His first (1926) recording (available on KOCH International Classics Legacy 3-7076-2 H1), in no way offends in interpretation. It was not unusual for a briskly-selling set of 78's to be remade, to take advantage of the yearly improvement in sound reproduction, and this may have been why Deutsche Grammophon came to him for a new recording. However, Strauss insisted on something unusual, that he be allowed an extra side (for a total of seven) so that he might take slower tempos in the last movement. Unlike today's recordings on tape, which can run as long as desired, a 78rpm recording session had to be carefully planned, and side breaks determined beforehand. Strauss, who preferred to pace music briskly, in 1948 amended his *Golden Rules* to advise conductors of Mozart to slow

down. Clearly, he had cogent reasons for wanting the additional time, and the recording at hand was the result. (It might be noted that both times he recorded the early version of the symphony, without clarinets.)

There are by now few people alive who were privileged to hear Richard Strauss as a conductor. Those who have written about the experience say that at his best he was superb. If our age is not to be blessed with his like, we must at least consider ourselves fortunate that he left us these reminders of his skills in a bygone age.

—Brendan Wehrung

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The Berlin State Opera Orchestra

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK

arr: Richard Wagner

[1] **Overture to Iphigenie in Aulis** 9:27
(Matrix nos. 1500/1 BM)

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

[2] **Overture to The Magic Flute, K. 620** 5:46
(Matrix nos. 1406/7 BM)

Symphony No. 40 in G, K. 550 (21:48)

[3] **Allegro molto** 5:32

[4] **Andante** 7:25

[5] **Minuetto** 3:43

[6] **Allegro assai** 4:50

(Matrix nos. 296-302 be)

The Berlin State Opera Orchestra

CARL MARIA VON WEBER

[7] **Overture to Euryanthe** 7:32
(Matrix nos. 1498/99 BM)

PETER CORNELIUS

(edited by Franz Liszt)

[8] **Overture to The Barber of Bagdad** 7:13

RICHARD WAGNER

[9] **Overture to Der Fliegende Holländer** 9:26
(Matrix nos. 1506/7 BM)

[10] **Prelude to Act I of Tristan und Isolde** 8:58
(Matrix nos. 1510/11 BM)

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

Total Time 70:45

RECORDED IN 1928

Disc-to-tape transfers: H. Ward Marston

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"Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist"
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Tristan und Isolde - Prelude and Liebestod
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R. STRAUSS: Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche
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(Recorded in 1927)
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Recorded in 1934

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK

arr: Richard Wagner

Overture to Iphigenie in Aulis

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Overture to The Magic Flute, K. 620

Symphony No. 40 in g, K. 550

CARL MARIA VON WEBER

Overture to Euryanthe

RICHARD STRAUSS

Conducts



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COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

Made in Austria

LC 6644

PETER CORNELIUS

(edited by Franz Liszt)

Overture to The Barber of Bagdad

RICHARD WAGNER

Overture to Der Fliegende Holländer

Prelude to Act I of Tristan und Isolde

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